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"...the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition...with respect to the fundamental rights of persons every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent."

Second Vatican Council
The Church in the Modern World
December 7, 1965

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S. Kathleen Keating, National Chairperson
National Assembly of Women Religious
Probe, vol. VII No. 6, March, 1978

"The National Assembly of Women Religious has not formally supported a resolution or taken a position on the civil rights of homosexuals or on their right to ministry. However, NAWR's commitment to a ministry of justice impels us to speak and act particularly on behalf of those who experience alienation and oppression in our society. Certainly, there is almost no group which suffers from deeply ingrained prejudices as does the gay community, from attitudes which not only lead to discrimination in employment and housing but also deprive human persons of their basic right to a full and dignified life. However, in order to be advocates we have to act out of deep conviction of the justice of the cause and an adequate understanding of the complexities involved. An essential part of this process toward understanding is listening to the stories of homosexuals, their pain and joy, their needs and their demands. To this end I participated in the 1977 Dignity Convention to hear the pleas of the Catholic homosexuals for something which ought to be theirs by right, to receive and be a part of the ministry of the Church...We hope that our annual national meeting this summer will continue this conversation on the rights of homosexuals so as to deepen our awareness and develop actions for change."

Priests' Senate
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis
March, 1978

"WHEREAS, the Church has addressed the issue of human rights as a legitimate issue in the struggle of many minorities, such as blacks, Chicanos, women, homosexuals and migrant workers....
WHEREAS, more than three years ago, the leadership and citizens of the city of St. Paul went on public record in support of human rights for all citizens, regardless of affectional or sexual preference;
WHEREAS, a certain group now seeks to strike down this section of the Human Rights Ordinance;
BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, go on record as endorsing and supporting the present Human Rights Ordinance of St. Paul and supporting human and civil rights for all persons, regardless of affectional and sexual preference;
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT WE, the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, call upon our brother priests and all Catholics in the archdiocese, especially those in St. Paul, to support the present Human Rights Ordinance of St. Paul."

Archbishop John J. Roach
Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
January, 1978

"Both the Christian tradition and our American nation are committed to the inviolable dignity of the human person. Some persons find themselves to be homosexual

in orientation through no fault of their own. It is a matter of injustice when, due to prejudice, they must suffer violation of their basic human rights. Like all persons, they have a right to human respect, stable friendships, economic security, and social equality. Social isolation, ridicule and economic deprivation of homosexual behavior is not compatible with basic social justice. Consequently, both religious and civic leaders must seek ways to assure homosexuals every human and civil right which is their due as persons, without, however, neglecting the rights of the larger community. . .

Homosexuality represents a source of a great deal of suffering and loneliness for many good men and women who did not choose to be homosexual, and are trying as best they can to lead moral, constructive lives in their circumstances. Not being able to look to the normal means of support found in marriage, they deserve a special degree of pastoral consideration from their churches, as well as human understanding and compassion from society."

St. Paul Citizens for Human Rights
Statement Opposing Gay Rights Repeal
January 24, 1978

"Regrettably a small group now seeks to strike down this ordinance. Not only would they deny basic human rights to certain of our friends, colleagues and neighbors, but they would inflict upon this community a campaign as disruptive and unnecessary as that which recently divided Dade County, Florida."

Signed: Sr. Janet Mathison, OSF, Executive Director of the Urban Affairs Commission of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis; Msgr. Jerome Boxleitner, Director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese.

Bishop Carroll T. Dozier
Memphis, Tennessee
Common Sense
January 22, 1978

"It's a human rights problem and it's one that the community at large must face. All that the gay community, as I understand it, is asking are the things we recognize as people - that they (gays) have a personality, a humanhood that is necessary to be recognized in the community and I see nothing wrong in their position. They have a right to the dignity of a human person...As I understand it the thrust of the gay problem is on the rights business. It is not whether they are sitting right or wrong. It is whether they are being given their rights or being wronged.. the person who is gay has the right to that dignity of the community in which he or she lives."

Rev. Benno Salewski, Executive Director
Joint Religious Legislative Committee
Minnesota Catholic Conference
Common Sense
January 22, 1978

"...one doesn't deal with a divergent lifestyle by denying

them their rights. Housing is a basic human need. Does disapproval of a lifestyle mean that they should be denied housing?"

National Federation of Priests' Councils
Resolutions of the 1978 House of Delegates

"WHEREAS together with the Church and the Nation, NFPC has addressed the issue of human rights as a legitimate issue in the struggle of many minorities, such as Blacks, Chicanos, women, homosexuals and migrant workers; and

WHEREAS the Justice and Peace Committee of the NFPC feels the necessity of alerting councils to the on-going struggle for human rights in all of the above mentioned categories; and

WHEREAS statements and activities are continuing to occur across the nation which are contrary to the NFPC House of Delegates resolution of 1974 concerning the basic civil rights of homosexuals; and

WHEREAS the issue of the rights of homosexuals is often obscured by those who disregard the crucial distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual activity;

BE IT RESOLVED that each delegate of this House of Delegates introduce the attached material regarding the civil rights of homosexuals, Addenda A, B, and C, as agenda for his respective council's meeting for the purpose of education and discussion of this and of other pertinent material."

1977 Statements

National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Sharing the Light of Faith
U. S. Catechetical Directory (Final Draft)
November 14-17, 1977
196.
Other Persons with Special Needs

"The list of groups with special needs is almost endless: ...the aged...young single workers...unmarried people with children...the divorced and remarried...the widowed ...persons with a homosexual orientation...The Church is seriously obliged to provide catechesis suited to the special needs of these and other groups. Some were overlooked in the past; but in several cases these special needs are of relatively recent origin: for example... those of young single people, whose needs are related to the recent emergence of new lifestyles. Catechesis is part of a total pastoral ministry to people with special needs...Sensitivity and careful planning are essential. Catechetical programs should whenever possible be developed in consultation with representatives of those for whom they are intended. The aim should be to help them overcome the obstacles they face and achieve as much integration as they can into the larger community of faith."

Diocesan Sisters' Council
Diocese of Rochester (N.Y.)
November 12, 1977

"Be it resolved that the Diocesan Sisters' Council urges the sisters of the diocese, in their search to understand both the unique gifts of personhood and an individual's role in building up the Kingdom of God, to include persons of all sexual orientation; confirms the need for a continuing ministry to the homophile community of the Diocese of Rochester; encourages participation of persons of homosexual orientation in the life of the Church, the visible body of Christ on earth."

12 American Catholic Theologians
Statement Concerning the Vatican Silencing of Fr. John McNeill
To the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith
October 31, 1977

"Recently the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith prohibited John McNeill, author of The Church and the Homosexual from publicly speaking on sexual ethics... In the matter of John McNeill, it is our judgment that the Congregation has ignored...scriptural and conciliar norms. This is a serious reversal of right order; before insisting on human rights in secular society, Christian authorities should first honor such rights in the church. Indeed, if anything, the church is called to surpass the measure of justice available in civil society.

In our day the observance of due process is of the essence. Beyond doubt, (the) norms of due process have been ignored in the case of John McNeill. Therefore, we are requesting that the Bishops' committee on theology meet with a number of us at your earliest convenience to discuss this serious breach of justice and its redress."

Signed: Elizabeth Carroll, R.S.M. Center of Concern; Margaret A. Farley, R.S.M., Yale Divinity School; Daniel C. Maguire, Marquette University; Marjorie R. Maguire, Ph.D.; Richard P. McBrien, Boston College; Richard A. McCormick, S.J., Georgetown University; Harry McSorley, S.T.D., St. Michael's College, Toronto; Christopher F. Mooney, S.J., University of Pennsylvania; Gabriel Moran, F.S.C., Boston College; Luke Salm, F.S.C., Manhattan College; Charles Curran, Catholic University of America; Gregory Baum, McGill University.

Commission on Social Justice
Archdiocese of San Francisco
October 12, 1977
(Resolutions)

"WHEREAS the Commission on Social Justice over the years has gone on record in opposition to discriminating employment policies based on sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS the Commission supported the California State Consenting Adult Act signed into law by Governor Brown in 1975:

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE that the Commission on Social Justice strongly oppose:

1. *All efforts to repeal established civil rights laws*

which protect persons from discrimination because of sexual orientation; and, specifically,

2. *The Initiative measure sponsored by Senator Briggs and...*

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE that the Commission will take a responsive role in working with others to develop a city-wide educational program against violent acts to anyone, regardless of their lifestyle."

Quixote Center
Mt. Rainier, Maryland
October 10, 1977
(Letter to American Catholic Bishops)

"This particular silencing has an especially destructive impact upon Catholic homosexuals who are struggling to be accorded their legitimate civil and religious rights. John McNeill has been a person of hope and Good News for this large community which, like other oppressed minority groups, has long been treated with fear and hostility. Their struggle has been acknowledged and supported by groups concerned for justice such as your own 'Call to Action' Conference. Trusting the spirit of Pope John and the Vatican Council, Catholic homosexuals have been seeking the bread of reverent pastoral care from our Church. They have been offered, instead, the stone of silence for their most eloquent petitioner."

Catholic Worker Community
Wichita, Kansas
October 4, 1977

"The Catholic Worker Community of Wichita, as Catholic citizens with Christian compassion, call for firm support for the human (legal and civil) rights of our brothers and sisters in the community who suffer alienation and oppression because of their lifestyles...

In the spirit of reconciliation and healing, it is imperative that we work to break down all barriers - be they cultural, economic, social or religious.

We call upon all people of good will - in an atmosphere of tolerance - to reflect and reexamine their attitudes concerning their acceptance of the recently amended civil rights ordinance to include homosexuals.

Further, we submit that it is the special vocation of the ordained clergy and hierarchy to provide all persons with a special degree of pastoral understanding and care."

Catholic Herald
Diocese of Sacramento, California
(Editorial)
September 1, 1977

"The initiative campaign against hiring homosexual teachers in California is nothing but a cheap appeal to the worst prejudices of the public...Few subjects strip raw nerves the way homosexuality does, and few debates bring out such deep ignorance and primitive fears. With the findings of modern psychology a more balanced attitude was beginning to appear in recent years, but the present campaign will do nothing to

help that understanding...the Anita Bryant platform...refuses to distinguish between the state of homosexuality and acts of homosexuality. It ignores all the findings of modern science in regarding the state of homosexuality as something the victim is morally responsible for. In calling it sinful and condemned by God it twists quotations from Scripture into caricatures that no Biblical scholar could recognize. It is not difficult to detect the fanatical tones of this platform in the California initiative drive."

Bishop Walter F. Sullivan
Bishop of Richmond
The Catholic Virginian
August 26, 1977

"We must distinguish between the homosexual and homosexual activity. The diocesan Committee on Human Sexuality has my approval and support because it will provide a forum whereby the Church can better minister to the religious and social needs of homosexuals and help break down prejudice and hostility against them as human beings as well as promote their basic human rights. The Committee...will not condone, foster, encourage, promote homosexual activity...The Church must defend the rights and dignity of every human being. Each person is precious in the sight of the Lord and must no less be in ours. As the bishops said so eloquently, the homosexual has 'a right to respect, friendship and justice.' May each of us reflect on our own attitudes and feelings as we reach out in loving care and service to all people, no matter what their sexual orientation might be."

West Texas Catholic
Diocese of Amarillo, Texas
July 17, 1977

"The issue is not whether homosexuality is a sin or not. The issue is whether a declared homosexual should be allowed to secure housing and a job.

The local paper is filled with letters from Christian people fervently pointing out that the Bible says homosexuality is an abomination, i.e., a sin. If you carry that through to its ultimate conclusion in the current discussion, you find yourself declaring that sinners should be denied housing and jobs.

That would put all of us out of business."

Fr. Andrew Greeley
Chicago Tribune
July 7, 1977

"I'm opposed to discrimination for any reason - be it against women who want to be jet pilots or homosexuals who want to teach in high schools...Despite Anita Bryant they are not interested in 'corrupting' or 'recruiting' young people. Mostly, they would like to be left alone, a not unreasonable request. They do not want to hurt others and they wish others would stop hurting them. To ask for freedom from discrimination does not mean for them to advocate a revolution."

Catholic Herald Citizen
Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin
(Editorial)
July 2, 1977

"Dialogue is long overdue on the subject of homosexuality... No responsible person can deny, the Jesuit magazine America has commented, that 'a more enlightened and more compassionate public attitude towards homosexuals would make for a healthier and more just society'...there is no denying that Anita Bryant's 'Save our Children' slogan is lacking in Christian love and compassion and violates basic justice. Moreover, her advocacy of legislation in California that would prohibit public schools from hiring homosexuals as teachers is highly discriminatory... All Church members are called by the Gospel to champion the rights of homosexuals together with all who are treated unjustly and to assist in resolving whatever injustice dialogue brings to light."

National Federation of Priests' Councils
Priest: U.S.A.
(Editorial)
July, 1977

"In the light of this blatant abuse, the repeal of gay-rights, I wonder what the Church will do. Will bishops, as a body or local ordinaries, speak up for the rights of persons as the campaign spreads across the nation? Will councils of priests take a public stance on this peace and justice issue? Will ministers use this crisis to speak in terms of Christian reconciliation and an opportunity for catechesis?...Possibly the faith community of Jesus Christ will declare in a variety of ways that it is committed to the justice due every human person as the creation of a loving God.

Justice and Peace Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Newsletter
July, 1977

"After the law prohibiting discrimination against homosexuals in housing and employment was repealed, Anita Bryant proclaimed the outcome as a victory for the Christian community, as if being Christian and being gay were somehow mutually exclusive. We cannot accept that - for obvious reasons. Justice demands that every person - heterosexual and homosexual - be given the opportunity to exercise his and her rights to live authentic and full human lives, free from political, economic and social restrictions...Homosexual persons, aware of their own sexuality and its importance in the development of their values and lifestyles, have been engaged in a long and difficult struggle to realize and enrich their sexual identities. It has been a struggle because so many gay people have been unjustly imprisoned by myths and distortions, victimized as stereotypes and subjected to harrassment, all because of ignorance and fear. The irrational and pervasive fear of homosexuality, rooted in centuries of ignorance and misunderstanding, is called homophobia... This fear not only creates oppression for the homosexual, it illustrates the profound lack of understanding of human sexuality...justice demands every person be given

the right to live authentic and full human lives. It also requires of us a corresponding responsibility: to create and energize opportunities whereby all people can enjoy that right. That includes the homosexual person. The issue of civil rights for homosexuals requires a response from us. We cannot afford the luxury of neutrality. Human rights are being denied...For those who have knowledge and expertise concerning homosexuality and the issue of civil rights, the leadership in our church and civic institutions needs to be approached and confronted. Far too little has been said for far too long...We all have the responsibility to enter into those social and political arenas where our voice will be heard, our votes be recorded and our commitment to justice witnessed."

35 American Catholic Leaders
Dade County (Florida) Gay Rights Referendum
June 3, 1977

"We reject the unfounded myth that gay teachers or counselors necessarily exert any undue influence on young people regarding sexual orientation, examples or lifestyles any more than is the case when these same positions are held by agnostics, divorced people, non-Catholics or individuals of varying religious beliefs or moral value systems...Our credibility as a Church in defending human rights abroad is seriously compromised when we continue to exclude certain groups from the human family at home."

Signed: Rev. Eugene Boyle, Rev. Robert Nugent, S.D.S., Sr. Jeannine Gramick, S.S.N.D., Rev. Richard A. McCormick, S.J. Mary Daniel Turner, S.N.D., David J. O'Brien, Margaret Cafferty, Rev. Robert Hovda, Rev. William Callahan, S.J., Rev. William Davis, S.J., Carol Coston, O.P., Maureen Kelleher, R.H.S.N. and others.

National Assembly of Religious Brothers
Providence, Rhode Island
June, 1977
(Resolution)

"Be it resolved that the National Assembly of Religious Brothers (NARB) support gay men and women in their struggle for human rights and dignity."

Philip Keane, SS
Human Sexuality
Paulist Press
June, 1977

"... our goal should be to give homosexuals a true welcome into society, a true sense of belonging. They have a variety of talents and skills that can be used for the service of humanity, and there should be an opportunity for them to develop these skills and talents...There are many examples (housing, education, etc.) of areas in which homosexual persons should be given a more fully human acceptance into society... Economically speaking, homosexuals have a right to use their skills to support themselves...On the subject of homosexuality and the law, the goal should be for homosexuals to be treated with sensitivity and by the same standards as other persons... it simply does not seem that much harm would be done to the

public good by legalizing private homosexual behavior among consenting adults...As far as the Church is concerned, its response to homosexuals should be to help them understand themselves as part of the people of God. Regardless of where one stands on the morality of specific homosexual acts, homosexual persons should have the ministry of the Church available to them. Workable solutions within which homosexuals can receive the sacraments should be sought. The aim of an organization like Dignity, which seeks to establish a place for homosexuals in the Church, is to be honored as a good aim even if there occasionally may be questions about some of the approaches with which Dignity pursues its objectives. The Church, more than almost any other element in life, offers people a sense of social belonging. With all the bias and unjust treatment homosexuals have received in the past, they especially need to belong. Thus they especially need to be welcomed by the Church."

Diocesan Social Ministry Commission
Diocese of Richmond, Virginia
May 21, 1977
(Recommendations approved by Bishop)

"We recommend that the Commission endorse and lobby for the proposed Federal legislation H.R. 2998, which would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by extending its protection against discrimination on the basis of 'affectional or sexual preference.'

We recommend that individual Commission members write letters requesting Congressional Representative Don Edwards, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, to hold hearings on H.R. 2998.

We recommend that the Commission endorse efforts in Virginia political jurisdictions to secure and protect civil rights in housing and employment for all persons regardless of their sexual preference.

We recommend that the Commission encourages the religious of the Diocese to consider the pastoral needs of gay men and women as an area for significant educational and pastoral attention.

We recommend that the Social Ministry Commission design and pilot a workshop to increase the understanding of gay and lesbian sexuality.

We recommend that the Social Ministry Commission endorse the use of textbooks which avoid a prejudicial attitude toward gay and lesbian sexuality.

We recommend that the Social Ministry Commission take appropriate action to insure that a balanced understanding of alternative forms of sexuality be included in programs of priestly life and formation, programs for lay ministries and in Christian education."

Office of Vicar for Urban Ministry
Diocese of Rochester, N.Y.
Ecumenical Clergy Statement
March 1, 1977

"We believe that all people are children of God, regardless of their sexual orientation, and have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance and pastoral concern and care of the Church and Synagogue.

We express our conviction that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the law with all other citizens (including employment and housing), and we call upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality.

We also believe that private sexual acts between consenting adults are not the proper province of government and enforcement agencies."

Catholic Theological Society of America
Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought
Paulist Press, 1977

"The traditional Christian attitude toward homosexuality down through the centuries makes the Church responsible at least indirectly for much of the prejudice and discrimination that homosexuals suffer in society today. As representatives of Jesus Christ, Church leaders have a serious responsibility to work toward the elimination of injustices that continue to be perpetrated on homosexuals by society. This includes discriminatory practices in both housing and employment... It should not be too much to expect that the Church and its leaders...take a lead in advance of the civil courts in championing the civil rights of homosexuals by working to change unjust social conditions, even when this is not a particularly popular cause. Eliminating discrimination on the basis of race and religion should extend logically to eliminating discrimination and injustice on the basis of sexual orientation.

As a group that has suffered more than its share of oppression and contempt, the homosexual community has particular claim upon the concern of the Church and its leaders. Homosexuals have a right to enlightened and effective pastoral care from pastoral ministers who are properly trained to meet their particular needs...Homosexuals have a right to expect understanding and acceptance from their pastors and counselors along with a constant challenge to maturity and integration in their lives and relationships. To this end, homosexuals need encouragement and support from their spiritual mentors. They need the supportive atmosphere of attitudes that Jesus exhibited to despised and oppressed of his day."

Gabriel Moran, F.S.C.
"Sexual Forms" (in Sexuality)
Christian Brothers Conference
Lockport, Illinois 1977

" It is not by accident that the word homosexual is generally used as a noun so that a person's being is totally classified by the category. I use homosexual here as an adjective to describe a sexual attitude which may apply to anyone but is a predominant attitude for millions of people in the U.S. This attitude is the basis of homophile relations, that is, sexual love between persons of the same sex. This love is especially threatening to the classification of people as married or single because the lovers are not isolated individuals nor are they getting together to have children... Responsible homophile relations are a dramatic example of mutual love. They show that patriarchal ownership is not necessary and that sex is not simply a contract for mutual exploitation...We are one of the few existing organizations that might provide a stable setting for the working out of

homosexual love...The existing organization of brothers has not been accepting of homosexual expression in the past. There is still a problem of structuring the organization to allow for this variation. Nonetheless it should not be necessary to exclude a person because he has developed a homosexual love for someone within or without the organization. For homosexual people who might wish to associate with us, we could provide aid or at least protection from repression. There is no immediate solution for the person of homosexual orientation...An organization of religious brotherhood is a natural bridge for the meeting of straight and gay worlds."

1976 STATEMENTS

National Conference of Catholic Bishops
"To Live in Christ Jesus" A Pastoral Letter on Moral Values
November 11, 1976

"Some persons find themselves through no fault of their own to have a homosexual orientation. Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship and justice. They should have an active role in the Christian community. Homosexual activity, however, as distinguished from homosexual orientation, is morally wrong. Like heterosexual persons, homosexuals are called to give witness to chastity, avoiding, with God's grace, behavior which is wrong for them, just as nonmarital sexual relations are wrong for heterosexuals. Nonetheless, because heterosexuals can usually look forward to marriage, and homosexuals, while their orientation continues, might not, the Christian community should provide them a special degree of pastoral understanding and care."

United States Catholic Conference
"A Call to Action", Detroit, Michigan
October 20-23, 1976
(Recommendations)

"...the Church actively seek to serve the pastoral needs of those persons with a homosexual orientation; to root out those structures and attitudes which discriminate against homosexuals as persons and to join the struggle by homosexual men and women for their basic constitutional rights to employment, housing and immigration."

"...that the Church encourage and affirm the pastoral efforts of Dignity, the organization of gay and concerned Catholics to reconcile the Church with its homosexual brothers and sisters."

"...that the Church provide pastoral care to all sexual minorities who are subjected to societal discrimination and alienation from the Church. Existing ministries of this type should receive recognition and support from Church members and leadership."

"...provide information, counseling and support for families who have members who are part of a 'sexual minority'."

"...eliminate every form of discrimination on the basis of...sexual orientation."

Senate of Priests
Clergy Education Committee
Archdiocese of Baltimore
July 9, 1976

"Because Dignity provides a supportive Christian Community, where homosexuals find personal acceptance, sacramental celebrations, and a forum for learning and sharing, the Clergy Education Committee endorses their work among the Catholic gay community and encourages bishops, priests, and deacons to minister pastorally to Dignity as an organization and to its members individually. This endorsement does not extend to acceptance of the belief that homosexual acts are morally good. The Committee shall continue to work for the reconciliation of Catholic homosexuals with the whole Church and particularly with its Catholic clergy."

United States Catholic Conference
Department of Education
Young Adult Ministry Board
June, 1976

(The Gospel)"calls us to be with gay men and women who are alienated from the community because of frequent expressions of fear and hatred, based on myth and questionable Scriptural interpretation."

Washington State Catholic Conference
Seattle, Washington
March, 1976

"The Washington State Catholic Conference recognizes the terrible impact that discriminatory patterns in society have upon both the individual and the total community. We firmly uphold the necessity of constantly motivating all people to cease and desist from discriminatory activity. We further recognize that many individuals in our society are not sufficiently motivated by moral or civic principles and must be constrained from their discriminatory patterns through restrictive legislation to protect the public order.

We also realize that many people have physiological or psychological sexual orientations which are not consonant with the majority and which are beyond their own free choice. We sincerely believe that to discriminate against this group of men and women is not only contrary to sound religious principles but in conflict with protection of basic rights in our American civic life. They should not be discriminated against merely because of the discovery of this basic sexual orientation in their lives. We are not addressing ourselves to any forms of conduct which follow from one's sexual orientation but only to the fact of a particular orientation: that fact should not result in discrimination in employment, housing, licensing or other matters of public participation."

Bishop Francis J. Mugavero
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Sexuality: God's Gift
Pastoral Letter
February 11, 1976

"We urge homosexual men and women to avoid identifying their

personhood with their sexual orientation. They are so much more as persons than this single aspect of their personality. That richness must not be lost...It is not homosexuality which should be one's claim to acceptance or human rights or to being loved by us all: it is the fact we are all brothers and sisters under the Fatherhood of God. Our community must explore ways to secure the legitimate rights of all our citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, while being sensitive to the understanding and hopes of all involved."

1974 STATEMENTS

Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton
Bishop Joseph L. Imesch
Archdiocese of Detroit
October 2, 1974

"...we have a serious obligation to root out structures and attitudes that discriminate against the homosexual as a person. We will exert our leadership in behalf of this effort."

John Cardinal Dearden
Archbishop of Detroit
Letter to Detroit Priests
August 20, 1974

"Certainly persons with this tendency are entitled to fairness and justice in society. Arbitrary discrimination against them is unwarranted. In justice, we feel an obligation to work to safeguard the rights of others in our society. We should be concerned, too, about respect for the proper rights of the homosexual."

John Cardinal Krol
Archbishop of Philadelphia
Letter to Dignity President
August 13, 1974

"Certainly persecution of individuals whose work is satisfactory for actions performed in private and with no connection to or effect on their work is wrong."

Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan
Diocese of Worcester, Ma
Letter to Dignity President
July 1, 1974

"I am sensitive to the fact that vicious and cruel harassment has been practiced and I deplore every instance of it ...The Church, moreover, wishes to be a reconciling force and therefore deplores any polarization that might exist between homosexuals and others. The Church wishes to manifest a genuine pastoral concern and love for all and to demonstrate its acceptance of every person and its respect for their personal dignity...The Church wishes to help--not condemn. Since many Christians fail to live out the Christian ideal in many ways--there is no justification for signaling out the homosexual for special reprobation."

The Advocate
Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.
(Editorial)
May 16, 1974

"But homosexuality should not be an occasion for cruelty on the part of heterosexuals. Some Catholics, unfortunately, fail to realize this fact. In the neighboring dioceses of New York City...and the diocese of Brooklyn...some claiming to speak in the name of Christ and His Church have violently opposed legislation which would, if enacted, recognize that people who happen to be homosexual have the same civil rights as other people.

While it is hardly our place to comment on the merits of this particular legislation we can do nothing other than applaud its principle: to categorically exclude some members of society from housing or employment opportunity simply because they are homosexual is just as unconstitutional and un-Christian as to exclude them from such human opportunities because of their race, national origin or religion.

The proponents of this law include respected heterosexual members of the community--good family men and women, and numerous Catholics, including some clergy and members of religious orders--and these are people who support a proposal like this NOT because they waver in their allegiance to Christ and His Gospel, but precisely because they adhere so courageously to His Gospel of human rights based on the principle of charity."

National Federation of Priests' Councils
March, 1974
(Resolution)

"WHEREAS a significant minority in this country is homosexual in orientation and/or behavior; and whereas gay persons have been the target of severe discrimination by society and in particular by the legal branch and other arms of government...BE IT RESOLVED that the National Federation of Priests Councils...expresses its opposition to homosexuality as such being the basis of discrimination in employment, governmental service, housing and child rearing involving natural or adoptive parents."

National Coalition of American Nuns
1974
(Resolution)

"It is immoral and should be illegal to discriminate against any person because of his or her sexual preference."

1973 STATEMENT

St. Vincent's Hospital
New York
December, 1973

"The only criteria in all hiring is sufficient experience and proper qualifications required to perform a specific job in a specific manner. Discrimination based on the sexual preference of patients or employees is as unacceptable as any other form of discrimination."

Social Justice

As Roman Catholics we believe that proclaiming the kingdom of God necessarily demands a vigorous public ministry of liberation from both personal and social forces that oppress people. Christian love also demands the recognition of the dignity and rights of all our neighbors. Persons with a homosexual orientation are oppressed people and also our neighbors. They have a full and equal claim upon our love and understanding and upon the sensitive and enlightened pastoral concern of our Church.

In their November, 1976 pastoral letter, To Live in Christ Jesus, the Catholic bishops of the United States declared that homosexual persons "should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights" and that they have a right to "respect, justice and friendship" and "an active role in the Christian community." We affirm the need for the Church to motivate people constantly to desist from discriminatory attitudes and activities. We applaud the efforts of other Catholic groups such as the National Coalition of American Nuns, the National Assembly of Religious Brothers and the National Federation of Priests' Councils to eradicate all forms of misunderstanding, ignorance and fear surrounding the topic of homosexuality and gay rights. We believe, however, that it is the sacred responsibility of all Catholic citizens to work for the establishment of a society based on justice in its laws and practices.

We urge Catholic leaders in particular to take the lead in describing and defending the civil rights of gay persons. We oppose any practice that permits individuals and institutions to discriminate against homosexual persons because of sexual orientation, which we believe cannot be identified solely with behavior. We believe that sexual orientation is at least as much a part of the human identity of some individuals as is color, race, sex or creed. We strongly support protective legislation on all levels of society that guarantees gay persons the same basic human and civil rights enjoyed by all other groups, including rights relative to housing, employment and accommodations. While being sensitive to the complexity of the issues involved and recognizing the rights of other groups in society, we reject the unproved assumption that protection in law for gay persons endorses any particular "lifestyle" any more than laws guaranteeing religious freedom endorse a particular religious denomination.

Myths

We deplore the unfounded fear that homosexuality contributes to the breakdown of family life. On the contrary, we believe that negative social attitudes toward gay persons encourage many homosexual individuals to enter heterosexual unions, many of which later end in divorce and heartache for all involved. We believe it is the parental and peer rejection of gay persons that contributes more to the disintegration of family life. We believe that there are no real grounds for the fear that gay teachers exert undue influence on young people in regard to sexual orientation, any more than do agnostics, non-Catholics, divorced persons or teachers holding a variety of religious or ethical-moral views. We do not believe that heterosexual youths can be "converted" to homosexuality. Gay persons do not choose heterosexuality, despite

the constant presence and example of heterosexual parents and role models in their early years of socialization. For a variety of reasons one's sexual orientation seems to be discovered rather than chosen and is a much more complex phenomenon than a simple heterosexual-homosexual dichotomy.

Actions

The Church's courageous defense of human rights remains ineffective if not forcefully embodied in the life and structures of local Catholic communities. For this reason we pledge ourselves to work for the elimination of discriminatory and un-Christian attitudes and practices in our parishes, schools, diocesan offices, chanceries, seminaries, religious communities and the Catholic media. We will work to implement the resolutions of the 1976 United States Catholic Bishops' "Call to Action" conference to:

1) Actively seek to serve the needs of those persons with a homosexual orientation,
2) Root out structures and attitudes which foster discrimination,
3) Provide pastoral care to all sexual minorities who are subjected to societal discrimination and alienation,
4) Provide information, counseling and support to families whose members are part of a sexual minority.

In light of our Church's constant teachings on social justice, we urge all Catholics to support sound civil rights legislation on both federal and local levels, and not to oppose such ordinances on the basis of unfounded fears, irrational myths and inflammatory statements about homosexual persons. We call upon all members of the Catholic community, especially our pastors, theologians, bishops, religious women and men, to join with us in this effort to provide leadership and witness in this ministry of justice, healing and reconciliation.

* *

If you agree with the CATHOLIC COALITION FOR GAY CIVIL RIGHTS statement, please complete the endorsement form below, detach and return to: "Catholic Coalition, 3312 Buchanan St., #302, Mt. Rainier, MD 20822."

As a Catholic, I (we) wish to endorse the CATHOLIC COALITION FOR GAY CIVIL RIGHTS statement. (Please print.)

Name _____

Organization _____ Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (AC)_____ Date _____

☐ This is a group endorsement.
☐ This is an individual endorsement. You ☐ may, ☐ may not use my organizational affiliation for publicity purposes.
☐ Enclosed is a contribution of $_____ to help cover expenses.

Signature _____

"First the Nazis came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. When they came for the trade unionists I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. And when they came for the Catholics I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me...And by that time there was no one left to speak for anyone."

Attributed to
Pastor Martin Niemoller

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AT CLAREMONT

A TIME TO SPEAK

ADDENDA

(Statements appearing since August, 1978)

Commission on Social Justice
Archdiocese of San Francisco
October 24, 1979

"...we strongly believe that the human rights of persons are not to be qualified by race, sex, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation."

Archdiocesan Commission for the Plan
of Pastoral Action for Family Ministry
"Responding to the Call"
Milwaukee, WI
September 22, 1979

"While recognizing the value of the nuclear family, the reality of present society has necessitated the broadening of our concept and practice of family ministry to acknowledge other lifestyles, including, but not necessarily limited to, single parent families, childless couples, the widowed, the separated, sexual minorities, and single people...It is our prayer...(that) all people will come to see the Church as the caring and loving community it is meant to be. It is our wish that the unchurched and lukewarm will see in our efforts a genuine desire to unite once again in the true spirit of Christian unity. It is our deep desire that parents and singles; divorced and widowed; the young and the aged; the heterosexual and the homosexual; the celibate and married; the alcoholic and the drug addict; the rich and the poor will find in the family of God the love, the encouragement, the acceptance and hope we all need to live productive and fulfilling lives."

Archdiocesan Priests' Senate
Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul
June 21, 1979

" We implore all men and women to respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of sexual orientation, race or creed."

United States Catholic Conference
Young Adult Ministry Board
Recommendations
May 30-June 3, 1979

"That parishes establish special ministries to the divorced, the unemployed, the homosexual, and any other group of persons who, because of societal rejection, ache for a sense of community."

Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Mission Committees
April-May, 1979

"We must be ready to speak to the elderly, youth, the handicapped, the

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single, the divorced, the homosexual, in a language that attests to our Christian concern and love for them. (Christ would have done no less!) Since our cultural complexion is so diverse and our attitudes so fixed, this has been and continues to be more problematic."

Priests' Senate of the Roman Catholic
Diocese of Albany
April 2, 1979

"Since one of the most important values in the tradition of the Catholic community is the belief in the sacredness of the human person, it is in the light of that value that we must approach the matter of human sexuality...the Catholic Church strongly affirms the worth of the human person, whether the orientation be homosexual or heterosexual and regardless of causation...Social isolation, ridicule and economic deprivation of homosexual orientation is not compatible with basic social justice. Consequently, both religious and civil leaders must seek ways to assure homosexuals every human and civil right which is their due as persons, without, however, neglecting the rights of the larger community...all of what is being said about the issue does not reflect sound logic or healthy reasoning. It is particularly disturbing to us to hear voices being raised even within our Catholic community that do not reflect the Gospel imperative...We...urge our fellow priests to bear in mind the venerable tradition in the Church of courageously reaching out to the victims of injustice, of standing with them, of giving voice to their cry of distress, of seeking and applying remedies for their ills...prayerfully to take care that their own attitudes, words and actions spring from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not merely from the residue of culture and prejudice albeit disguised as religion."

The Advocate
Archdiocese of Newark, NJ
Editorial
December 13, 1978

"We insist on the dignity of the person who is a homosexual. The Gospel and the law of the land call upon us to respect all persons. Our respect for the individual, for the dignity of the person may not be construed as approval of homosexuality as a way of life nor as an open invitation to promote homosexuality as an option for the young. However, we are aware that studies on the question of the homosexual are far from complete and are of the greatest complexity. In the fields of psychology, medicine, sociology and related sciences, there are many unknown, difficult areas still to be clarified. Specialists are in doubt on critical questions such as origin, nature, progress in, or change from such orientation. We are cautioned to be most careful in formulating judgements...A fortiori, we should be most careful in formulating legislation that would punish homosexual persons as felons...We hope that society never reaches a point where the practice of homosexuality is looked upon merely as an 'alternative lifestyle'. But, does making it a criminal offense promote the common welfare? We call for more prayful reflection on this most serious human problem."

America (Editorial)
November 11, 1978

"A more enlightened and compassionate response is long overdue. In Orange County or Dade County, as in any other part of the United States,

there are undoubtedly homosexual teachers whose personal lives do not interfere with the excellent work they can do in the classroom. The law should not intrude on their private life, either to endorse it or condemn it."

Bishop Juan Arzube
Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles
The Tidings
October 20, 1978

"I am opposed to Proposition 6 because it would mean that good teachers could be fired merely on the basis that they are known to be homosexual regardless of the fact that they are excellent teachers..."

Archbishop John Quinn
Archbishop of San Francisco
President, National Conference of Catholic Bishops
October 11, 1978

"Proposition 6 involves moral, justice and civil rights issues...the civil rights of persons who are homosexual must also be our concern. Hence, the American bishops affirmed the following principle in a national pastoral letter on moral values: 'Homosexuals like everyone else should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship and justice.' There is serious reason to believe that the proposed amendment in this initiative would tend to violate and would limit the civil rights of homosexual persons."

Bishop John S. Cummins
Bishop of Oakland, California
October 3, 1978

"of importance are the issues of justice and civil rights contained in this initiative...the civil rights of homosexuals as a minority has to be a concern...the vagueness of the initiative's language might well open the way for abuses and harassment which would jeopardize the responsible freedom of teachers, whether homosexual or heterosexual."

California Conference of Catholic Charities
Directors
October 3, 1978

"Any attempt to make decisions by statutory categories is objectionable. Individuals should be judged and not as a group of people. This proposition suggests discriminatory and prejudicial action against certain individuals because of their sexual orientation... All members of the teaching profession, regardless of sexual orientation, have a professional responsibility to promote the moral growth and development of their students in accordance with the value orientation of the educational institution which they serve...Teachers should be judged on the basis of professional competence, not sexual orientation."

Office of Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of Seattle (Washington)
September 23, 1978

"...the Board of Catholic Charities states that concern is directed towards the community of all people and attention is focused on the

dignity and worth of each person. Charity demands commitment to promotion of social justice as a matter of conscience...we seek to assure all persons of every orientation the minimum requirements of justice, which guarantees and promotes the basic rights of all persons."

Raymond G. Hunthausen
Archbishop of Seattle (Washington)
August 25, 1978

"I support the efforts of the city of Seattle to insure that the basic human rights of all its citizens are respected... I oppose Initiative 13 because I fear it will encourage discrimination... All men and women have the inherent right, under God, to live and work in a manner befitting their dignity as human beings. I am convinced that it is our duty to support the city's ordinances which protect that right."

National Assembly of Women Religious
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
(Resolution)
August 10-13, 1978

"WHEREAS: Members of NAWR identify with those struggling for human rights and for the recognition of the dignity of all persons:

Homosexual men and women are being subjected to persecution and oppression at this time in the United States;

Church teaching has been interpreted many times to support this oppression.

BE IT RESOLVED:
NAWR members, as persons of the Church, are resolved to commit ourselves to the struggle of people in sexual minorities who are discriminated against by society and alienated from the Church.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1) Education - we will develop an awareness and appreciation of our own sexuality and help educate our communities and the Church in the area of sexuality by including in NAWR publications current material on the theological, psychological and social dimension of sexuality.

2) Support - We will endorse the efforts of groups working for gay civil rights (e.g. Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights, Dignity) through direct communication with their leadership.

3) Accountability - Individuals are invited to report on ways they have implemented this resolution."

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
General Chapter in Los Angeles
Summer, 1978

"That the provincial and vice provincial superiors encourage the sisters to study the question of homosexuality within the context of sexuality. Ongoing personal development groups will provide suggestions for resources: books, tapes, speakers, etc."

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